

NOT therefore, to raise expectation, but to repress it, I here lay before your Lordship the plan of my undertaking, that more may not be demanded than I intend, and that before it is too far advanced to be thrown into a new method, I may be advertised of its defects or superfluities. Such informations I may justly hope from the emulation with which those who desire the praise of elegance and discernment must contend in the promotion of a design that you, my Lord, have not thought unworthy to share your attention with treatises and with wars.

IN the first attempt to methodise my ideas, I found a difficulty which extended itself to the whole work. It was not easy to determine by what rule of distinction the words of this dictionary were to be chosen. The chief intent of it is to preserve the purity and ascertain the meaning of the English idiom ; and this seems to require nothing more than that our language be considered so far as it is our own ; that the words and phrases used in the general intercourse of life, or found in the works of those whom we commonly stile polite writers, be selected, without including the terms of particular professions, since, with the arts to which they relate, they are generally derived from other nations, and are very often the same in all the languages of this part of the world. 'This is perhaps the exact and pure idea of a grammatical dictionary ; but in lexicography, as in other arts, naked

science.

science is too delicate for the purposes of a dictionary. The value of a work must be estimated by its use, not by its length. It is enough that a dictionary delights the critic, and that at the same time it instructs the learner ; as in the case of a machine, the purpose, that an engine amuses the philosopher, and the subtilty of its mechanism, if it requires no more knowledge in its application, as to be of no use to the common workman.

THE title which I prefix to my work has conveyed a very miscellaneous idea, and they who have put this dictionary into their hands have been accordingly to expect from it, a solution of almost every question. If foreign words therefore were rejected, and the words little regarded, except by critics, or those who are fond of criticism ; and however it might enlighten the reader, it would be all darkness to them that only read to be entertained. They learned much oftner consult their dictionary for the meaning of words, than for their structures or for the words that most want explanation. They are naturally terms of art, which therefore explain themselves. I taught my predecessors to spread with a prodigious and pious luxuriance over their productions.

THE academicians of France, indeed, rejected the words of science in their first essay, but found a necessity of relaxing the rigour of their determination, and, tho' they would not naturalize them, they permitted a single act, permitted them by degrees to